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# Dancers go through the vocal motions

By LINDE HOWE-BECK
of The Gazette

Le Groupe de la Place Royale is the only dance company in the city worried about catching laryngitis.

That's because the modern dance group is learning to accompany its movements with song.

When co-directors and choreographers Jean-Pierre Perrault and Peter Boneham stage *Danse Pour Sept Voix* (Dance for Seven Voices) at McGill's Pollack Hall on Nov. 13, they will sit back together and appraise this, their latest and possibly most unusual experimental creation.

It is, however, only the second piece on which they have collaborated. The first, seen as part of the Cultural Olympics program in July, was *Les Nouveaux Espaces* (New Spaces) which they never got a chance to objectively evaluate since Perreault was forced to replace an injured dancer.

Learning to dance and sing simultaneously has been a revelation to choreographers and the seven dancers.

"It's been freaksville to go from dancing to singing and then do both," says an exhuberant Boneham perched on the edge of a chair at one side of the long brick and mirrored practice room atop Monument Nationale where the company has its offices.

"But voice is a continuation of using the body . . . it's another form of movement . . . I think we're heading towards opera — at least I would like to go in that direction," he says, his words coming in bursts rather like the sounds emanating from the dancers in the centre of the floor practicing voice warmups.

Perreault is, as usual, a little more subdued than his excitable partner. But his eyes are shining and he's every bit as keen about this 'voice dance.'

"Dancers must warm up their voices the same as their bodies," he explains the groans and giggles coming from the group as Pauline Vaillancourt puts them through their sound-making paces.

"We must be careful we don't break their voices."

Vaillancourt, a Montreal classical singer who has worked with Groupe 7 and Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, has never before worked with non-musicians.

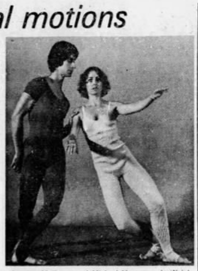
She has had to overcome the dancers' shyness to express themselves in song. She has had to teach them to breathe differently and sometimes this new way has been in direct contrast to the way they had been taught to breathe as dancers.

For example, singers' diaphragms must be relaxed and dancers' tight. So Perreault and Boneham had to work with dancers with relaxed stomachs.

"We are learning to dance more with the body than just with the torso muscles," Perreault says. Since the work progressed in sections with choreography coming last, certain movements were impossible.

"You can't sing and bend backwards at the same time — you can bend forward, though," he said. So the choreography was modified as the challenges forced the creators to expand and explore new possibilities of movement.

*Danse Pour Sept Voix* and *Les Nouveaux Espaces* will be performed to music by percussionist Vincent Dionne on four nights: Nov. 13 and 14 and Nov. 20 and 21 at Pollack Hall.



Suzanne McCarrey and Michael Montanaro in 'Voix'

## Summer time

It's time to hear Donna Summer, popular disco-soul vocalist, who will be appearing at the St. Denis Cinema. Sharing the stage for the one-night show will be "featured guests" album, *Four Seasons of Love*, was recently released by Casablanca Records.

# Disco 'Lindbergh' flies high

**Rock & Pop**

by
Juan Rodriguez

The current best-selling record in Quebec, a disco version of Robert Charlebois' eight-year-old anthem, *Lindbergh*, is a revealing product of the sort of hybrid pop music created in this province.

*Lindbergh II* is by a group known as Toulouse, comprising three in-demand local session singers who recorded vocals here to a soundtrack done in Alabama by the most renowned session players in America, the Muscle Shoals Band. The reqult is a souped-up slick gimmick of a tune that replaces the original spirit of Charlebois record — the Quebecer's mongrelized cultural identity — with a neatly orchestrated disco sound that is de facto evidence of Quebec's assimilation into the American life.

The vocals (by Judi Richards, Mary-Lou and Heather Gauthier — who have appeared on sessions and stages with practically every name "vedette" in Kay-bec) effervescently zip through the disco beat; the breathy voices conjure up nostalgia for Charlebois' "Eastern- Western-pi-Pan American" rap, while the sound effects and pop-soul sound tingle with the immediacy of the air-traffic controller's language fracas.

The "sound" was created in the Southern U.S. by the players who put the soul sound to such stars as Aretha Franklin, Paul Simon, and Ronee Blakely. The people at Magique Disques realized they could not get that sound here, but they also knew that Quebecois' music listeners have a particular propensity for the soul-disco style. Voila, instant success — *Lindbergh II* is already a "gold" single and Toulouse's debut album is climbing the charts.

The same formula was employed by Magique's other act, Boule Noire, led by Montreal soul-singer Georges Thurston. Its debut album, also recorded in Alabama, has topped the 50,000 "gold" Canadian sales mark in Quebec alone, and half a dozen of their songs are huge hits here.

Boule Noire, sans the Southern boys, was in France over the summer, where it played at a jazz-rock festival and was booed for its "vulgar" accents. However, its members also attracted the attention of correspondents for *Rolling Stone* and the *Village Voice*, both of whom hailed the group's "different" sound.

But that's the way Quebec music is making it in the world — on the rebound, recochetting through original American styles but with a Quebecois sense of isolation. The careers of such diverse singers as Michel Pagliaro, Jesse Winchester, Mahogany Rush, April Wine and Leonard Cohen can be traced to this hybrid stylistic process.

Meanwhile, Boule Noire's biggest gig since the rash of hits takes place when they are "featured guests" for an American disco singer — Donna Summer (who records her stuff in Germany!) — tonight at the St. Denis Cinema.

Next week brings the return of ourtown's reigning rock heavies internationally, Mahogany Rush, for their first local club date since hitting the U.S. touring grind three years ago.

The trio is at the Montreal area's biggest club, Le Grand Salon, which of course is 40 miles out of the big city in Mascouche. From there they will hibernate in beautiful downtown Montreal's Tempo Studio to record their fifth album, for Columbaa.

# Film festivals dominated by nationalism

By CARMEL DUMAS
for The Gazette

TORONTO — In as much as the Festival of Festivals and the Canadian Film Awards which ran here simultaneously last week attracted large crowds of movie-goers and film buffs, they could be called successful.

But as such affairs go, these were dominated by the error of a confused attempt to show that on the one hand Canadians can do as well as Americans and on the other that we can do without the U.S.A.

Concern with Canadian nationalism has been growing in this country's film community for four or five years now. The base is economic as much as creative at least in English Canada, and it is there that several major battles have been won.

Putting money into the pocket of a Canadian film-maker is now a valid goal for a politician on the make, and there is always a film- maker delegate lobbying the Secretary of State's office or the Ontario government.

This strongly nationalistic faction of film-makers, finding its voice mainly in the Canadian Council of Filmmakers (CCFM), has made an increasing number of people worried about American domination of the medium — or just plain tired of the subject.

Still, Canada is the world's largest export market for American films.

There's controversy about whether Canadians shouldn't stop nagging the Americans, for fear of retaliation, and there are thinly disguised efforts to polish up the American image. The game is getting tenser, no question. And that's what dominated the picture in Toronto last week.

A major example was the flap surrounding the film awards, which, despite a checkered 27-year past, had become a focus for the Canadian cinema.

Last year organized largely by the CCFM, the gathering, held in Niagara-on-the- Lake, did not do wonders as a gala event. But it did provide a forum for political and craft discussion and generally reflected what was going on in Canadian cinema.

But somehow in the past year of wheeling and dealing that formula was lost. The 1976 awards, under the chairmanship of Nat Taylor — for years involved in exhibition and distribution — became an anonymous event, devoid of nationalistic character. Of 171 entries, barely 40 were found good enough for the final competition. No film-makers were invited to meet the audience. French- Canadian films were back after a so-called friendly agreement last year to hold separate festivals. And Czech Jan Kadar (director of *Lies My Father Told Me*) competed against Canadians for a craft Etrog, although in previous years a foreigner would no, have been in competition.

However, those backward steps were peanuts compared to the storm that broke when it was announced that the American film distributors — the villains of the piece, in the eyes of Canadian film- makers — were to hand out their own award to the Canadian film with the highest public acceptance in North America — that is, the one that made them the most money.

Despite strong protest from the Canadian film industry's official bodies, Taylor refused to allow a vote on the matter and the awards went on as planned.

So in spite of the controversy, the telecast Sunday night, when all Canada found out who won which Etrog for what and the film world presented a properly turned-out appearance, remained the major event of the awards.

At the other end of Toronto, in Ontario Place, the Festival of Festivals — which had promised Jack Nicholson, Julie Christie and other greats of the international film scene and which had scheduled grand galas every night for every country but Canada — found itself offering more or less what last year's film awards had offered, but at about 10 times the cost ($500,000, of which $275,000 was cash grants and the rest donations of goods and services).

The large audiences — made up mostly of the Toronto students that the awards screenings failed to attract — seemed satisfied to listen to panels made up of Canadian film people called in at the last minute when the promised international names failed to materialize.

So this festival kept its audience happy. Why, then, didn't the Secretary of State's office, which helped finance it and the awards, insist that they be held at different and non-competing times?

There are obvious problems with running them simultaneously. The awards are a domestic competition, whereas the festival claimed to be an international, non- competitive affair aimed mainly at buyers.

This latter claim also fell flat on its face, as European buyers stayed away in droves and the Americans refused to consider Canada a foreign market — an attitude which many felt was the real scandal of the week and which recalled the nationalists to the forefront of the film industry in Canada.

By Friday, after American distributors had refused to respond even to letters from the Secretary of State's office, when it became clear none of the much-touted 22 new American films would be shown, when it was obvious Jeanne Moreau and Dino Laurentis were the only big names to come close to the festival, Bill Marshall, president of the Canadian Producers Association and the festival's director and organizer, really opened fire on the Americans and directors joined producers to say: "That's enough."

In a theatre full of people who had come to hear American and Canadian producers talk about co-production, David Perlmatter of Quardran Films, Canadian director John Trent and Marshall sat next to seven empty chairs which had pinned to them the names of the absent Americans.

Perlmutter said that Canada was serious about nationalism in its film industry, "whether the producers agree or disagree."

But participants had to admit that Canada is just not a big priority with the Americans and the only way it will ever become one is through withholding some of the box-office profits that flow so easily southward.

*Los Angeles Times* columnist Charles Champlin denounced in print the American producers' attitude. Other producers at the festival, who are daily involved in co-production negotiations, said Americans did not realize the tax shelters offered to private investors in Canadian film — along with Germany, Canada is one of the two last such havens.

Money, under all these political and business pressures, has come to dominate the Canadian director's thoughts, often threatening creativity.

For the older film-makers, who have perhaps three or four solid features but no great hit behind them, the question is especially painful.

Panelist Peter Pearson, a diredor and important voice of the CCFM, responded to a question about whether he had to follow certain vogues by saying that the chief vogue in this country was not to use Canadian directors. It was typical of the festival that Pearson was a very second choice on a panel that was to have featured Nicholas Roeg and other big names discussing directing. The director of more than 40 films in the past 10 years, Pearson — like so many other Canadian film-makers, including Montrealers Claude Jutra and Gilles Carle — finds himself working in the drama department of the CBC in order to be able to continue making films.

As far as novelty goes, the Festival of Festivals blew it. Parts of it, such as the *Womanscene* organized by writer, critic and teacher at York University Barbara Martineau, the Young Cinema section and the Canadian films turned out to be the festival's highlights.

Maybe next year the Secretary of State's office and festival organizers should find a realistic basis for making an event out of the very active, interested and struggling film life in Canada.

And if the policies asked for in all those panels still fail to materialize, then maybe invitations should be handed out to Canadian politicians rather than to American distributors.

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# SPINOFF

## Kudos in order for Japanese Mann

Kudos are in order for flutist Herbie Mann and his latest musical project **Gagaku & Beyond** (Finnader Records/Atlantic), just released.

Arthur Levy, in the album notes, says "*Gagaku and Beyond* represents a carefully nurtured project of Mann's in this decade, to introduce to Western (American) audiences the delicate wonders of Japanese traditional music, played on traditional Japanese instruments, with the added twist of bringing certain jazz improvisational ideas into the fabric of the music."

The concept is excellent and it works from the musical aspect. This will come as no surprise to those who are familiar with the many musical travels of Herbie Mann. Mann was one of the first musicians to explore the musical idioms of other peoples, at the top of a wave which includes Dizzy Gillespie, Yusef Lateef, John Coltrane and Paul Horn, to name a few. The exploration continues and joyfully broadens our musical understanding and spectrum.

The album features three traditional Japanese tunes of Gagaku (Japanese court music of the eighth century) and Shomyo (Buddhist chants, reminiscent of Gregorian chants). The two remaining tunes on the album were composed by Herbie Mann and his pianist, Pat Rebillot. All except the title tune are performed in various combinations by Mann's quintet and three Japanese semi-traditional and traditional groups featuring flutes and woodwinds, mouth-organ, koto and various string instruments, drums and chant.

Some 20 Japanese performers are added to the Family of Mann, which is composed of the leader on flute; Pat Rebillot, keyboards; Sam Brown, guitar; Tony Levin, bass; and Steve Gadd, drums. Although the blending of the musical interpretations if faultless, it is possibly the juxtaposition of the idioms which is most interesting.

As one can feel the underlying swing in J. S. Bach, Mozart or Vivaldi, so one can feel the swing under Japanese music. That is precisely what Mann expresses and underlines. Jazz, on the other hand, has long made use of rhythmic variations, silences and bent notes which are inherent to Japanese music. The combination of the two results in a most melodic, serene and inspiring session within a universal sound.

*Gagaku & Beyond* is full of peaceful images but it also abounds in driving percussion and gently swaying, very polite funk. It might make you want to send a postcard to Herbie to thank him for a delightful musical holiday. Again!

— NIGHTHAWK

## New collection welcome

Back about 1968 there was a young rock 'n' roll musician named Gram Parsons who loved authentic country music more than anything else. He briefly joined the Byrds, and the one album he cut with them was *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*, the album that introduced rock audiences to the country sound.

After the Sweetheart album he left the Byrds and with several other musicians, including fellow former Byrd Chris Hillman and future Eagle Bernie Leadon, he founded the original Flying Burrito Brothers, the first and greatest country-rock band. Then with the help of an unknown harmony singer named Emmylou Harris he cut two solo albums, *GP* and *Grevious Angel*.

The albums that Parsons recorded as a Byrd, Burrito Brother and solo artist are recognized as the definitive catalogue of country-rock music. In 1973 Parsons died of drug-related heart failure. He was 26.

Now, three years after his death there's a new Gram Parsons album. **Sleepless Nights** (A&M) is made up of out takes (leftovers) from Flying Burrito sessions and from the *Grevious Angel* sessions with Emmylou Harris. The album is a welcome addition to the Parsons collection.

These songs may have been out takes but it's probably because there just wasn't room for them originally.

The Burrito cuts show why that band, in its first incarnation, was the greatest of the country-rock groups. Parsons' singing is first rate and the back-up, particularly Chris Hillman's bass lines, is good and solid. The solo cuts remind us that Parsons was at his best just before he died. Who knows what could have come next?

Emmylou Harris explains things in the liner notes, ". . . they came to see this young man and to hear the voice that would break and crack but rise pure and beautiful and full with sweetness and pain."

MIKE REGENSTREIF

## Clapton 'fun' in boozy, weird disc

**No Reason to Cry,** (RSO Records) is probably guitarist Eric Clapton's first "fun" album. It is not his most stinging — those days are long gone, buried in the mire of Yardbirds, Cream, Blind Faith and Layla — but it is one of his most consistently listenable. The atmosphere of the recording, at The Band's Shangri-La studio in Malibu, no doubt had plenty to do with his mellow and superbly accomplished playing. Clapton and his band were joined in the sessions by a stream of rock royalty: Bob Dylan, Ron Wood of the Stones, Rick Danko, Richard Manuel and Robbie Robertson of The Band; even Georgie Fame bopped over from England.

Such a big-name aggregation might sound like a gigantic ego-trip — and it is! — but the atmosphere is so loose and boozy that the egos fall for the music at hand.

Despite the sumptuous tonal quality of the recording (Shangri-La is practically tailormade to The Band's deep resonance), *No Reason to Cry* has a pleasantly ragged quality that lends spontaneity to the very nifty playing of the protagonists. And the compositions, by Clapton, Dylan, Danko, Otis Rush, among others, have a varied sense of personal ambiguity. A nice, weird, boozy reunion rock 'n' roll party record.

• • •

Lynyrd Skynyrd has grown to be one of the most satisfying concert rock bands of the 1970s and so, on the eve of a Forum appearance Nov. 18, the group's live album, **One More From the Road** (MCA Records), comes as a fine prelude. The double-disc set, the band's fifth, is one of the best road albums ever and will probably outsell Lynyrd Skynyrd's others (which have already totalled 3 million). They appeal to a drunk wrecked crowd who just want to shake to loud rock; Lynyrd Skynyrd lets loose with a brand that combines the natural swing of a rockabilly with the metallic intensity of British heavyrock. The result is a rock 'n' roller's delight.

— JUAN RODRIGUEZ

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